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PROFESSOR MAHAFFY ON "INTERNATIONAL JEALOUSY."

In the latest number of *The Nineteenth Century* (April, 1896), Professor J. P. Mahaffy, the well-known historian of Greek literature and culture, leaves his chosen field in order to moralize on present political complications in a paper that bears the attractive title of "International Jealousy." The brilliant Irish scholar is so intent upon his moralizing rôle (it will be remembered that he is a clergyman as well as a teacher and writer) that his style seems to lose somewhat of its wonted brightness, but his article is none the less worth reading. It goes without saying that the Professor is disturbed at the sight of the apparent political isolation of England, and at the jealousy that has been manifested in all parts of the world (most unjustly he thinks) at her aggrandizing colonial policy. Incidentally he admits quite fully the part that English stolidity and insolence have played in bringing about the state of affairs that he deploras — a part which was made the subject of a short article by the present writer in the last number of this REVIEW. As an Irishman with strong English affiliations, if we err not, he is naturally capable of appreciating the effect of English bad manners on a sensitive people, and he tells an anecdote in this connection that will bear repeating:

"Visiting one day in London a building in course of erection, and standing near an overseer who was superintending the workmen, I asked him whether he had any Irish among them. 'Oh, yes, sir,' was the reply. 'There is one who has been with me sixteen years; he is the best man I have. There is another I have had for eight; he promises to be just as good. *We despise no man, sir.*' Could any combination of public and private virtues ever make such a person tolerable to the Irish, except as a butt for their ridicule?"

It is easy to agree with Professor Mahaffy in his contention, but we find ourselves wondering how after telling such an anecdote and drawing the proper moral from it, he could be led into writing sentences like the following about a people whose love for national glory has become almost a proverb. Professor Mahaffy's rôle, be it remembered, is that of a moralist, and he is reprehending international jealousy directed toward England, it is therefore his duty to state facts in as conciliatory a way as possible, but this is how he soothes the feelings of the French people:—

. . . "The day will certainly come when France will recognize her failures in colonies and relapse into a European power with high civilization and with ample resources at home. If her population goes on decreasing, she will ultimately be content to take some such position as is held by the Dutch, who were once masters of the seas, and able for the fleets of England and France combined. Now, content with the large foreign possessions which she retains, with citizens comfortable in means and cultivated in intellect, Holland presents to us the example of a nation not forgetful of her noble past, but in no way jealous of her greater neighbors. That lower stage has been surmounted. So it will for France, unless a malignant fate sends her another military genius, who will set her warlike instincts aflame and rouse again the wild dream of European primacy in her people. Otherwise, according as she finds each new foreign acquisition not a profit, but a burden, she will grow cool in her ardor for such extension, and will learn to be more indifferent to the acts of her neighbors."

Now we are not at all concerned with the truth or falsity of the position here taken by Professor Mahaffy, what we want to accentuate is its banality in the mouth of a man preaching against international jealousy. "Jealousy against the great and good England is a sin," he seems to say to the excitable Frenchman. "Just look to the north of you and behold how contented your neighbor, the Dutchman is. One of these days when you discover what an ass you have

been in trying to rival John Bull, esquire, you will be content to fill your pipe and sit out in front of your house through the fine summer afternoons puffing away and ruminating on the number of francs you have managed to store up within the last twelvemonth." This is almost, if not quite as banal as the "We despise no man, sir" of the London overseer. It is almost as banal as the placid statement made by the Professor further on in his article that "there is a mediæval dignity about Turkey that does not condescend to" the "out-bursts against their neighbors which deface the French and the American newspapers." Dutchmen and Turks are not jealous of England, says the Professor, why, O ye Frenchmen and Americans, do ye not emulate their virtue? This is so lovely that one hardly notices such wild statements as that the American public of the West is "silly" and that "Anglophobia is systematically taught in American schools"

But what is it now that makes even a cultured native of Great Britain like Professor Mahaffy fall into absurdities such as these whenever he undertakes to discuss the burning question of England's colonial policy. We fancy that the answer can be given in one word—Cant. Cant is as much the bane of the Englishman in the political sphere as bad manners are in the social sphere. The Englishman, in his dealings with other people at least, is rarely ever willing to admit that he can possibly be in the wrong or that he ever acts from motives not recognized by the Golden Rule. He shuts his eyes to all the teachings of history on the subject of the struggle for subsistence between races and nations, and behaves like the bully at school who after having stuck pins into all his small neighbors runs blubbering to his teacher whenever retaliation in kind is threatened or inflicted upon him. If the English people would not be quite so certain that they are God's chosen missionaries, their position among the nations of the earth would be immensely improved. They are undoubtedly a great people and they have done much to civilize the lands and races they have

subjected to their sway, but they have not always acted from the philanthropic motives they so incessantly profess. Their statesmen and publicists talk blandly of the time when English troops will be voluntarily withdrawn from Egypt and India amid the hosannas of regenerated natives, but there are few instances on record of England's having given up a foot of territory for unselfish reasons, and some of us must really be pardoned for doubting whether she intends to do so in these cases. Perhaps she does when she is suffering from a peculiarly aggravated attack of cant, but hardly at any other time. Now we are very far from saying that England ought to give up Egypt and India and content herself with a greatly contracted empire. This would be to indulge in cant ourselves and would be especially unbecoming in Americans who have read something about the Mexican war. All we claim is that Englishmen should not affect righteous indignation at the endeavors of other people to rival or set limits to their marvellous powers of expansion. Perhaps it is a foolish step to take ; if so, England will reap the benefit of it and, if she weeps at all, will shed only crocodile tears over the fate of her "silly" and "jealous" neighbors. Perhaps the entire earth is destined to submit to English sway, and it may be the height of wisdom for Americans to express the wish, as some of us do, that England would take the whole of South America into her keeping ; but as long as the future is wrapped in darkness and as long as nations are compelled to struggle for existence, so long it will be permissible to the Frenchman to refuse to look forward with pleasure to the comforts of a Dutchman's pipe, and so long it will be necessary for Americans to discuss the propriety of maintaining or extending (it matters little which) the public policy which declares that we will resist to the uttermost the interference of European states with the affairs of this hemisphere. England may have a perfect right to extend her power — other nations have a perfect right to tell her to halt. Perhaps they will not be able to check her, but certainly the the cant of her publicists will not prevent them from trying.

Yet how idle all this is when we read in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for April 1st of this year M. Paul d'Estournelles de Constant's pessimistic article on "Le Peril Prochain — L'Europe et ses Rivaux !" If as the French deputy thinks and the late Mr. Pearson taught, Europe and America are to go down before the industrial powers of the Oriental peoples to whom England has given the implements of civilization, of what importance are the questions that are now stirring up the rivalry of the Western nations, and why should anyone take the trouble to expose the pretensions of English cant?

AN OBSERVER.